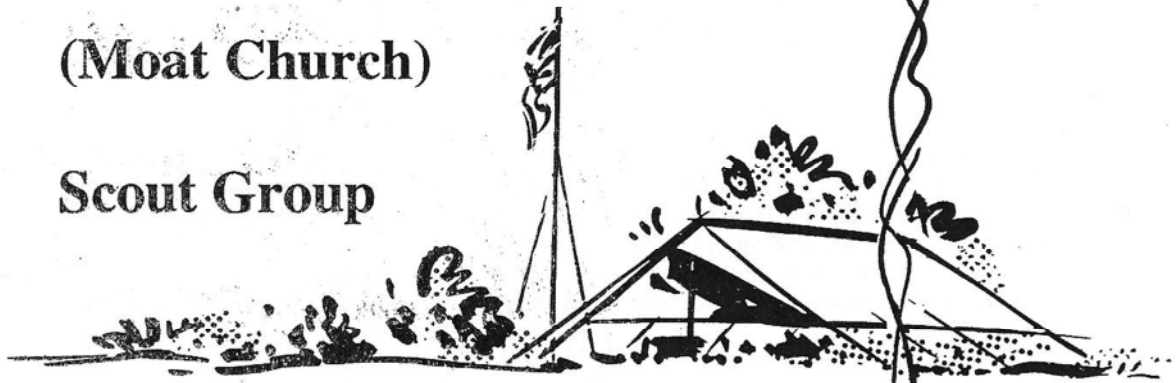


**6th East Grinstead**

**(Moat Church)**

**Scout Group**



# *The Early Years*

**Scouts**



# *The Early Years*

How does one start to write about a Scout Group? The task seems enormous, especially when it consists of extracts from contemporary documents such as Newsletters and personal reminiscences of a few Leaders; however, on the basis that those early years set traditions, shaped policies and established a thriving Group, this booklet attempts to record event highlights, particularly of the Troop, and some of the personalities in the hope that others will enjoy learning of those early days, sharing the successes and keeping the Group flame burning brightly for tomorrow's youngsters.

## *Getting started*

Scouting at Moat Church was launched at an inaugural Parent's evening on 6 November 1970; this was the culmination of much background work as the Church, under Rev Norman Jones' energetic leadership, had long wanted to provide a uniformed organisation for boys to complement the existing Girls' Brigade company. However, the traditionalist Scout District Commissioner of the time, Edgar Cooper, was initially hostile to the mere idea of a new Scout Group, let alone a Group Sponsored by a Church, even though East Grinstead (population was 18,000, now 30,000) was then experiencing a massive population growth with the new Durkins Farm and Gardenwood estates, and more recently, Herontye and then Estcots estates.

Obstacles were overcome, the required seven Leaders (GSL, SL+ two Assistants, CSL+ two Assistants) were recruited, interviewed and underwent their three months training, and Scouting at Moat finally commenced in mid-November. The Scout Association had just adopted a new uniform and a Scout uniform then cost £6, consisting of a shirt 28/6d, mushroom trousers 72/-, green beret 7/9d, leather belt 8/4d and scarf 3/5d (remember 12d=shilling, 20 shillings=£1)!

## *The first Leaders*

Geoff Martin, who had previously been an Officer in the Boys' Brigade, agreed to become the Group Scout Leader, a key role which he held for the next seven years.

Brenda Kirkham, who had recently married and moved to Dormansland, was the CubScout Leader (Akela - not 'I'll kill 'er' as one CubScout told his mum), assisted by Brian Ward (who stayed nine years) and Jacqui Capel, who left a year later when she married and moved away.

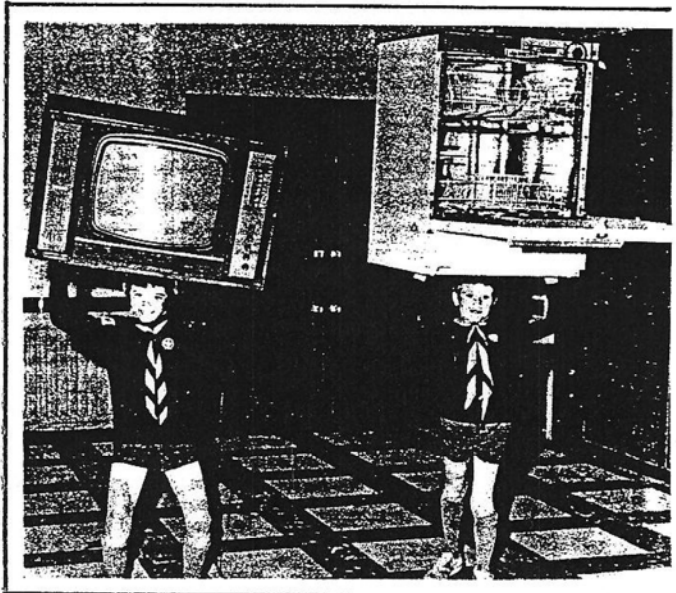
John Darwood (Skip), who with Norman Jones, had been instrumental in recruiting the team of Leaders, was Scout Leader for the first eight years, having previously been a Scout Leader both in 1st E Grinstead and earlier in Golders Green, N London. The Assistant Scout Leaders were Derek Packman (Kim), also an experienced Scout Leader from Muswell Hill, and John Orchard (Beaver), another newly-married who had recently moved into the town.

Much of the subsequent success of the Group was due to the energy and enthusiasm of these original Leaders, who with minimal or non-existent resources, established the firm foundations and worthwhile traditions upon which the Group thrived.

## *The Group Executive*

This was formed early in 1971, with a Scout dad, Lt Col John Walker as the first Chairman; his able chairmanship and hard work enabled the Executive to quickly set about fund-raising, starting with the then unheard of, Grand White Elephant Sale. John organised this and five subsequent Sales with his customary military precision and effectiveness, raising £64 at the first and nearly £200 at the sixth of these moneyspinners; he also personally organised the sale of Webb Ivory Christmas cards for many years with great profits to the Group. In 1979, one GWESale raised over £500 and in 1981, £528 a new record.

The GWESales involved the distribution of 2000 specially printed Handbills by CubScouts, followed up a week later by 'an army' of Scouts calling back to collect goods which Scout dads then transported to the Halls for sorting/renovation. Every parent was strongly encouraged to help via a phone call from the Chairman or GSL; advance publicity was arranged with large window posters and special photo opportunities for the local press, including one memorable shot of two tiny CubScouts apparently balancing a television and a dishwasher on their heads!



### **Scouts hit on a bargain double**

CUB-SCOUTS Mark Hill and Paul Devlin feel a real weight will be taken from them after next week's white elephant sale.

The two nine-year-olds, who go to East Grinstead's Most United Reformed Church Scout group, were as delighted as their colleagues and leaders at the public's response to an appeal for sale items.

The colour television and automatic dishwasher, both in working order, are just two of the items the group will have as bargain offers, thanks to generous donations.

Leaders are not sure who handed in the two crowd-pulling items, but have put a £39.95 price tag on the television and will let the dishwasher go for about £20.

The sale opens at Most church hall, on Saturday afternoon, April 19. Profits will help buy new camping equipment for the Scouts.

Regular communications with parents and the local press formed an integral part of establishing a Group identity and the Troop Newsletter, soon enhanced by duplicating on gold paper with black headings, reinforced the Group's scarf colours. In 1973, the content of the Newsletter was widened to include the CubScouts and appeared most months, with distribution being taken over by the Group Executive. Group policy evolved that a Chairman, although appointed annually, should serve for no more than three years, and John Walker was succeeded by Derek Skoyles, then Bill Faircloth, Chris Grantham, Alan Smith, Bob Diplock, Geoff Edler, Dave Worsell and currently, Andrew East.

Annual Parents' Social evenings were held, with various displays from indoor tent pitching (deafening!) to CubScouts performing Morris Dancing in 1975 (repeated the following year at Gilwell), and Scouts building an overhead Monkey bridge. Many of the Group Executive, together with other parents, actively supported events by joining in as adult helpers, catering for camps and instructing on various Proficiency Badge courses; during those early years, the Troop parents ran a number of Cycling Proficiency courses using Halsford Park school, with excellent results.

## *The Group grows*

At the first meetings, there were twelve CubScouts (the District insisted on this limit) and seventeen Scouts, the result of local advertising; Pack numbers grew in sixes to reach 24 the following Autumn, by which time the Troop had increased to 29, no mean feat considering that no CubScouts came up for that year as only younger boys had been initially recruited into the Pack. The very success of the Group continued to attract new members and five years on, the Pack had increased to 36 and the Troop to over 50! This, in turn, led to the introduction of artificial constraints in the Troop, with the threat that any Scouts missing three consecutive weeks or three Church Parades may be dismissed; this latter point was quickly seized upon by the local papers at the time, although the outcome was even keener Scouts.

## *Activities*

The Troop was determined from the very beginning to be the most active and progressive in the District and its first outdoor event was an Activity day in January at Broadstone Warren for the fledgling Scouts; unfortunately, two 'did their own thing' and got lost, being found many hours after the event wandering in Forest Row, the first of many escapades. For the next four years, every February half-term holiday offered a variety of Activity Weekends, with Scouts having a choice of Gliding at the Scout Association's Air Centre at Lasham, cruising on a canal barge on the Grand Union canal or River Wey, or a Hiking weekend.

In November 1974, the Troop supported a national Scout 'Operation Lifeboat' appeal to raise money for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution by having a sponsored hike along the South Downs Way, which raised £40 towards the national £100,000 target. The hikers 'slept' overnight in Newhaven's Scout Headquarters; a Police raid at 1.30am (they suspected a break-in), roast turkey dinner, clambering over the then-disused Fort with one Leader falling through a sheet of corrugated iron, and watching the slipway launch of the lifeboat to a real emergency were some of those highlights.

## *Adventure Weekends*

Any summary of that first decade must include the large number of weekend camps; there were regularly eight each year, starting with a Patrol Leaders' four-day training camp at Elstead in Surrey every Easter, a new Scouts' camp in June at Fen Place and usually one London Adventure weekend staying at Baden Powell House. This last weekend always included special visits such as seeing the national paper presses roll, the Post Office Underground railway, and evensong sitting in the Bishops' pews of St Paul's Cathedral, plus bi-annual Scout and Guide Folk Festival at the Royal Albert Hall.

Buckmore Park, the Scout site near Chatham, was another popular venue because of the wide range of facilities provided from indoor swimming (E Grinstead only had an outdoor pool then), to climbing walls and the special go-karting tracks. Despite all these hazardous activities, the only casualty needing hospital treatment was Mark Tyler who 'fell' out of his bunk bed during the night; however, it was his Dad, Allan, there as a parent helper, who was more shocked over Mark's bleeding head than Mark himself.

As the Troop became established, other activities such as the Pioneering weekends, were added; the canoeing/boating/sailing weekends, again run with parental help, were another annual and very popular event, using a variety of locations from Marlow to Chichester harbour. However, one boating weekend in October 1977, when we stayed aboard HMS Discovery in central London, nearly ended in grief, with one sailing gig brushing against the bows of the Bow Belle tanker (an incident Charles Sheldrick will always remember) and another sailing gig sinking under Blackfriars Bridge (John Southam was one of eight involuntary swimmers)!

## *Leadership changes*

The loss of both Beaver and Kim in 1972 when they moved out the District was a severe blow, but fortunately two Scout dads, David Clarke (Ramah) and David Mepsted (Chil) helped to fill the gap. Subsequently, Geoff Harris (Bosun), Gordon Jesson, Roger Stevenson and in 1977, Tony Fisher (who is still Gear Quartermaster, making him the longest-serving Warranted Leader) joined the Scout Leader team.

In 1978, John Southam took over as Scout Leader, although he too moved away from the District in 1980, when Adrian Lucas stepped into the role; in Autumn 1982, Malcolm White, an original Scout with the Group, moved from helping the Pack to take over the Troop for the next seven years, until he was appointed ADC Scouts. In 1989 Tony Baulch, another ex-Scout, took over as Scout Leader and remains to this day, assisted by Paul Stocker and Tony Hobbs.

Meanwhile, Beryl Joyce had started with the CubScouts in 1972 and stayed as CubScout Leader for the next 14 years, providing the essential stability and experience which enabled the Pack to develop into one of the best, with Bob Searls joining in 1973 and staying 17 years. Another early tradition which still survives is that the Scout Patrol Leaders are encouraged to complete their three months service requirement by helping out with the Pack, and many stayed several years becoming Leaders, including Paul Stocker, who became CubScout Leader, and Dave Watkins.

When Geoff Martin left the Group in 1977, John Darwood took over as Group Scout Leader for the next six years, relinquishing this role to become District Commissioner in 1983. Tony Sanders, a Scout dad, became GSL for the next seven years, until in 1990, he became District Chairman; Sally Batchelor (who had been helping with CubScouts) then took over, passing to Chris Bartlett in 1991 who is currently GSL.

## *Camping Equipment*

The very first tentage was donated by Kim's old Troop, 10th Muswell Hill and consisted of two Rover hike tents and various very old items. Appeals in the Troop Newsletter resulted in an offer of kitchen catering equipment, gratefully collected from a liquidated company in East London; the Office tent was donated by a parent, and much was borrowed.

In 1972, four ex-hire Stormhaven Special patrol tents and groundsheets were bought @ £65.45 each, together with the first ex-Army dining shelters collected from shops/warehouses in central and East London; these formed the basis for entertaining over 50 Swedish visitors for the Martlet 72 Summer Camp, together with eight Patrol food storage boxes, built under Keith Brown's skilled direction with each using one sheet of ply, an idea that John had seen in Japan.

In 1973 using the proceeds of the GWESales, the Group was able to purchase two new Super Safari tents @ £125 each, tents which still survive today; during the next five years, determined fundraising resulted in one or two new Patrol tents being bought every year, together with the associated dioxies, stoves, and cookery utensils, including dish drainers (a good idea copied from the Guides).

Within seven years, the Group, thanks to active Group Executive fundraising, had become the best equipped in the District, able to fully equip the eight Scout patrols together with an impressive array of central tentage and equipment able to support CubScout camps, numerous lightweight hiking tents with a total Insurance value exceeding £4,000.

## *Equipment Storage*

One of the early tasks was to board the roof space above the Church vestries, to enable this area to be used as a gear storage area. Access however, was and still is, via an extending ladder and as the volume of equipment increased, together with greater usage, alternatives became essential. Eventually, a new Gear Store was agreed, designed by Bosun, and in 1977 (just after the neighbouring Vacuum Cleaner warehouse had been torched) was built in front of the existing Church hall, together with a committee room.

The Scout Group raised £2000 towards the £6000 total cost, with Moat Church donating a further £2000 and the final £2000 being a gift from the sale of the Ashurst Wood United Reformed Church (sold to the Anglicans and now known as St Dunstons). In recognition of this, the committee room is known as The Ashurst Suite. The electrics were installed by the Leaders and the Gear Store fitted out with ex-BT cable runways and purpose-built racking to become the powerhouse, under Tony Fisher's expert care, for launching camps and expeditions over many years.

## *Summer Camps*

No record of the Troop would be complete without some mention of the enormous range of Summer camps, which were always seen as the pinnacle of the Scouting year and which regularly attracted over 75% of the Scouts, even though attendance was restricted to the over 12 year-olds.

In 1971, the Troop joined a District camp at St Ives, Cambridgeshire as John Darwood had been selected to lead the Sussex Scout contingent to the 13th World Jamboree in Japan. This international theme provided the impetus for the Troop to join a Sussex International camp in 1972 at Hillside, near Henfield when the Troop, together with the Girls' Brigade (Cathy Darwood was Captain), hosted 52 Swedish Boy & Girl Scouts from Gothenburg. This link, reinforced when John was working in Sweden in 1973, led to the first ambitious camp abroad in 1974.

The beautiful Forest of Dean was the 1973 venue, when together with the Girls' Brigade and Guides from Golders Green (John's sister was Captain), all had a most memorable twelve days. Memorable for many reasons - the gear lorry with most of the food and camping equipment broke down on the way, arriving at 11pm instead of 2pm; the resultant order of 52 Cod n' Chips to a local chippie beggared belief and tent pitching started at midnight. Campfires and banquets led to the immortal 'Yellow Arrow' song which pilloried the girls who had failed to follow the Forestry way-marked paths, returning to the campsite many hours late, all crammed in the back of an ice-cream van; hot showers by courtesy of the local football club; camp characters included 'Wheels' who forever drove the minibus; and Chil whose first attempts at parascending went disastrously wrong.

## *Sweden 74*

Much debate took place through the winter of 1973/4 over the relative merits of land or air travel to Sweden the following Summer; the sudden oil crisis forced an enormous rise in fuel costs, but eventually, a meeting of parents agreed that the Troop should go and a special fund-raising team was established to enable the costs to be subsidised. Events included Beetle Drives, Discos, Whist Drives, Waste Paper collecting and a new idea - The Round-the-Houses meal where every course was eaten at a different house! Needless to say, the fund-raisers excelled and the resulting two weeks in Sweden, enjoyed by 26 lucky participants including five Girls' Brigade, were fantastic, with yellow pea soup and regular caviar paste being two of the less popular foodstuffs. The first week was in Swedish Scout homes, the second on the island of Orust, where the twin-seater loos, built in prominent positions with views overlooking the Swedish archipelago, will remain a vivid memory; the loos only had lower half stable doors! The actual cost to participants was £30 each.

By 1975, our Moat Church had a new minister, Rev Brian 'Bones' Stone and this led to a twelve-day summer camp, again with our Girls' Brigade, at West Bergholt near Colchester, of which five days were spent sailing with Fellowship Afloat at Malden. Brian attended the whole camp whose highlights included the 4am site evacuation due to 'Marsh Gas', the Lifeboat trip to sea for one Patrol, Paul Faircloth's broken leg (he kept himself occupied shooting 500 Airgun pellets), and the use of the local Colonel's outdoor swimming pool with a sherry reception for the Leaders, particularly welcome in the blistering heat of that Summer.

### *The Swiss Link*

In 1976 the Troop, via Scout Headquarters, hosted a Swiss Scout Troop at Broadstone Warren, with a hoped-for return trip the following year to Konolfingen, a small village in the Bernese Oberland. However, the links faltered during the winter and four of our Leaders drove to Switzerland for a weekend in March 1977 to ensure the Summer trip took place, a round trip of 1500 miles, much to the delight of the Swiss Scouts - this raised everybody's enthusiasm and detailed plans were then made, both in East Grinstead and in Konolfingen, for another trip of a lifetime.

Again, a special fund-raising committee, led by Clive Murphy, was set up to ensure that the camp fee remained within everyone's grasp, starting with a Swiss cheeses evening and including the ever-popular Round-the-Houses meal and a Fondue party; finally, a party of 34 Scouts and 10 Venture Scouts flew to Berne in July 1976, at a cost of £45 each. The high mountains and steep descent to Berne airport necessitated everybody being weighed and some cargo being removed prior to take-off, with the result that the Group passport was almost left behind at Gatwick airport.

The earlier difficulties had galvanised both the fund-raisers and the Leaders, who set up an elaborate preparatory programme; five Swiss girls, working locally as au-pairs, were recruited to help at Troop meetings covering topics such as Swiss money, culture, language, tourism and traditions - part of the deal with these attractive girls was that we shared our traditions, such as the English pub, an onerous task for the Leaders!

## Switzerland 77

Pfadfinderabteilung Kuonolf

Konolfingen Scouts of Switzerland

6th East Grinstead (Moat Church) Scout Group



BP

The trip itself was a dream come true, with the Scouts enjoying a week's home hospitality, followed by a week in the Bernese Oberland mountains, with a three-day hike camping above 10,000ft to celebrate Swiss national day, 1st August, followed by downhill skiing without skis, most finishing prostrate. One unfortunate Scout celebrated in his host's home by igniting a pack of 100 fireworks bangers, causing severe damage to the bedroom. Fortunately, Swiss Insurance and a huge bouquet of flowers saved the situation!

The Venture Scouts went their separate ways upon arrival, splitting into pairs and tackling the demanding Explorer Belt scheme; this involved a 125 mile hike with ten projects to complete, which were intended to foster an understanding of the local way of life. All four teams successfully completed the expedition, with Graham Mepsted and Alan Bardwell being awarded the coveted Explorer Belt, an unusual honour to achieve at the first attempt.

### *Three years in the UK*

Following the outstanding success of 1977, plans for a two-week camp in 1978 had to be similarly ambitious. After much searching, Hawkhurst Court, then a boys' boarding school near Petworth, was obtained for the first week; this fantastic private site had been the Canadian command base for the Normandy landings and boasted excellent facilities including an outdoor swimming pool - this was where the first camp accident, a badly broken arm, happened to Chris Murphy. The second week was spent at the superb Cobnor sailing/canoeing centre in Chichester harbour.

In 1979, the Patrol Leaders decided on Wales and the final choice after much site visiting in snowdrifts, was a farmer's field alongside the River Usk in the Brecon Beacons, offering river canoeing and hill-walking to the summit of Pen-y-Fan. Deborah Darwood was born at 5am on the day of departure, so John Southam not John Darwood, led an enjoyable, albeit cold camp.

West Sussex International Camp (WS80) at Ardingly Showground was the 1980 venue, with the Troop hosting 31 Girl and Boy Scouts from the town of Haslach, close to the Czech border in Upper Austria. WS80, run jointly with the Guides, had over 2400 young people attending, with lots of activities, sports, crafts and outings; friendships developed helped the 1981 return trip to Austria.

## Austria 81



Vienna was the first stop when 37 Scouts and Venture Scouts flew to Austria in July '81. Once again, a massive fund-raising effort led by Alf Smart, together with various grants, enabled costs to be kept down to £85 per head. Some of the Venture Scouts went from Vienna direct to the Austrian Jamborette whilst the main party stayed in a Viennese Scout hostel for four days sightseeing, including the Prater fairground complete with English Ferris wheel, Tichy's ice-cream and riding the Viennese trams. From there, a long train journey to Haslach, with a special civic reception in the town square, and a week's home hospitality.

The final week was a traditional Scout camp on a superb field adjacent to the River Muhl, building camp tables and benches from pine logs, surrounded by pine forests and castles. Many of the friendships from that camp lasted years, with subsequent links/exchanges maintained on an individual basis, and at least one Scout returning for two week's Austrian hospitality.

### *Back in the UK for four years*

In 1982, the Troop celebrated the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Scout movement by camping with other Scouts and Guides of the United Reformed Church Scout & Guide Fellowship, at the site of Baden-Powell's original 1907 camp on Brownsea Island, in Poole harbour. Most of the normal Scout activities took place, including sea canoeing, which proved exhausting for some younger Scouts.

The 1983 camp was at Battle near Hastings, where John Southam had moved to, and his help in arranging local activities was much appreciated. Eaton Vale, the Norwich District site, was the following year's venue, with a superb canoeing river adjacent to the site - unfortunately, so was a noisy railway! In 1985, the Troop chose to go to Sedburgh and then discovered why the Lake District is so named, evacuating to indoor accommodation to avoid the very wet and windy weather.

## ***Holland 86***

The lure of the continent led to the Holland trip for 31 Scouts in 1986, postponed from 1985; again the weather was mixed, from very hot to Hurricane Charlie, fortunately not disrupting the busy programme of activities and day visits, including the impressive Delta works.

Barnstaple in Devon was the 1987 venue, with a reappearance of the infamous 'Marsh Gas' in an updated electronic black box version, again proving a highlight together with a special day at RAF Chivenor. The 1988 camp was at Marwell in Hampshire, camping adjacent to the Zoo . . . however, the real attraction was the Activity centre, including mini-motorbikes and clay pigeon shooting. Malcolm's final camp as Scout Leader was at the private Heythrop Park site in Oxfordshire, where the canoeing lake proved ever popular.

## ***Achievements***

Within three years of the Troop starting, Stephen Mullin became the first Scout to gain his Chief Scout's Award and this notable success was celebrated by the whole Troop having a Chicken 'n Chips supper; he was soon followed by others, and in the first eight years, it quickly became the norm for every Patrol Leader to achieve his Chief Scout's Award (nearly bankrupting Troop subs on celebratory suppers). The numerous Adventure weekends, in addition to the camps, encouraged Scouts to record their nights spent camping, and Peter Clarke was the first Scout to achieve over 100 nights away during his time with the Troop.

The original Troop had quickly gained its credentials, winning the District Camping competition for the first time in 1974, and retaining it for the next four consecutive years, as well as winning the District Marathon incident hike and numerous District Swimming Galas.

By 1983, Troop numbers had fallen to around 30 but Malcolm's organisational skills coupled with much hard work saw the Troop embark on its second successful phase. Numbers increased steadily and by 1985 had returned to 50 Scouts; a new Challenge Trophy had been introduced as well as a special Patrol Leaders' Autumn camp. Also in 1985, the Troop won five District competitions and went on to win the County Cooking competition for the first of a record four consecutive years. The following year, the Troop won eight out of nine District competitions and then added the County Camping Trophy to the County Cooking success.

The contagious enthusiasm of the Troop resulted in a steady stream of Progress Awards, most notably 26 Chief Scout's Awards and 13 Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Awards between 1983 and 1989.

## ***Venture Scouting at Moat***

As our Scouts reached 16 years of age, they were transferred into the District Anderida Venture Scout Unit (VSU); however, the Group was keen to maintain links with these young men, realising they represented a potential source of future Leaders. Also the Group wanted to have its own VSU to complete the family of the Group, although finding a suitable Leader proved difficult.

Eventually after much searching, Geoff Prevett agreed to become our Venture Scout Leader (VSL) and Moat VSU was founded in January 1977 with seven members, four of whom had been founder CubScouts way back in 1970. The Unit quickly established itself and its early enthusiasm was evidenced by the tackling of the Explorer Belt scheme in Switzerland that Summer; amazingly, they gained the terrific success previously mentioned, winning two Explorer Belts and six Explorer Certificates at the first attempt.

## *The first Queen's Scouts*

More determined effort followed, culminating with four of the founding members gaining their Queen's Scout Awards in early 1979, the top Proficiency Award of Scouting. A special Newsletter captured their names - Graham Mepsted, David Thompssett, Douglas Thorogood and Alan Bardwell - and achievements, followed by a formal reception evening at Windmill Lane school which nearly razed the roof when one Hot Air balloon caught fire!

Increased business pressure forced Geoff to resign later in 1979, and the VSU functioned without a Leader for over a year until Dave Charlton took over in early 1981. By 1982, the Unit had 15 members, with various new posts all filled (two Fund-raisers, one Public Relations, three Programme Editors) and a continuing wide-ranging programme, including the annual Dinner, and achievements such as "the District Handball shield, a competition won by dedication, superior skill and courage" to quote the PR blurb that the Unit put into our Newsletter! Dave moved away to Horsham in early 84, and John Simmons took over as VSL soon after.

John brought a wealth of Scouting experience to the Unit, encouraging them with Easter Expeditions to Cumbria, a full social programme and lots of varied and worthwhile activities, including the annual Summer expedition abroad. Graham Mepsted, who had progressed right through the Group, took over the reins in May 1990 and has been VSL ever since, thus recording an unbroken link of 25 years, man and boy, with the Group.



FOUR Queen's Scouts from the 6th East Grinstead (Moat Church) Venture Scout Unit were presented with their awards by County Commissioner, John Button at a 'spectacular' presentation evening on Saturday evening at Imberhorne Lower School, Windmill Lane, East Grinstead. Left to right with a celebration cake decorated with the Queen Scout's badge are John Button, David Tompssett, Graham Mepsted, Alan Bardwell, Douglas Thorogood and John Darwood, Group Scout Leader

## **TOP AWARD FOR FOUR SCOUTS**

## *Service and Services*

Inevitably, different Sections of the Group have been involved in many varied forms of service both to the community and to individuals. In the early days, Scouts helped at Chailey Heritage Home for Disabled Children, made bird nesting boxes for old people's homes and helped the elderly in re-tuning radios when station frequencies changed. Scouts were also involved in the annual Fen Place Garden Party each June; Fen Place was then a home for retired URC Clergymen and this service was unexpectedly repaid by Fen Place inviting Scouts to use the delightful grounds. It was a popular venue for New Scouts weekend camps and the annual Firework Party. CubScouts adopted wasteland near the Norton House toilets, entertained old folk with Carols and helped in an East Grinstead clean-up campaign whilst Venture Scouts have been involved in everything from car-parking duties, restoration work on the Basingstoke canal to helping at the annual Edenbridge Show. The Group contributed to 'plant a tree in 73' in King George's Field, and often assisted at the Lions May Fayre.

On the Group's tenth Anniversary in 1980, a special evening Church Parade Service at Moat was led by the talented Nonesuch Folk Group from Tunbridge Wells, who had previously appeared twice at the Royal Albert Hall.

## ***Beaver Scouting***

Our Beaver Colony was started in late 84 by Jean Baird, one of the Scout mums, and she was helped by a team of three Assistants, Sandy Diplock, Sandra Knight and Rosemary Hayhow. They initially had 19 boys who joined for "Fun and Friendship"; their first meeting on 29 October celebrated Halloween making Spiders, Cobwebs and taking Spider Cakes home.

This section, formed within a year of the official launch of Beaver Scouting, completed the provision of activities at Moat for young people aged between 6 and 20; by this time, the Moat Girls' Brigade had amalgamated with Trinity Girls' Brigade, leaving Scouts as the only uniformed youth organisation at Moat. The Colony soon expanded to its full strength of 24 and with strong leadership and their special programme themes, like Snakes (imagine the five-foot+ python skin they played with) and Transport, Health and Water, they quickly established the Colony. The first District event was a Fun Day in 1985 at Blacklands Girl Guide site, where our Colony were to be Apache Red Indians, but the weather intervened and this event was transferred to 1st East Grinstead Scout Hall.

Jean stepped down after two years and Rosemary took over, eventually passing the Leadership to Maureen Sanders who is still there today (but keen to pass it on).

## ***Girls in Scouting***

Girls have been in Venture Scouting since its inception over 25 years ago, but other Sections were all for the male sex only. However, a landmark national decision in 1991 allowed each Group to make its own choice as to whether girls should be admitted, with the proviso only that once admitted, girls must be allowed to progress through all Sections, with female Leaders. Moat Church Scout Group consulted widely and decided to admit girls in 1994, but the initial interest has not, so far, resulted in female members of other Sections.

## ***And finally,***

Already this brief résumé has lengthened to many pages, despite heavy editing, and it still leaves a lot unrecorded; however, it can only represent a fraction of the Group's activities and people during a busy quarter century. It is my hope that others will be prompted by this to add their anecdotes and achievements, and if these are passed to me, I will be happy to incorporate as appropriate. If then, this provides a record which can be referred back to in a further 25 years, and rekindles fond memories of "when I was just a boy", then the many happy hours spent producing this will have been worthwhile.

With Leaders past and present, I wish the Group continued success as it seeks to serve young people of East Grinstead now and in the future.

John Darwood  
4 November 95

PS: The final sheet shows some of the differing Headings used for Newsletters over the last 25 years.  
Can you guess which year each Heading was first used ?

*Which year was each of these Headings first used ?*

A



**6th East Grinstead (Moat Church) Scout Group**

Group Scout Leader: Mr. GEOFF MARTIN, 4 Sheridan Place, East Grinstead. Tel. 24135  
Scout Leader: Mr. JOHN DARWOOD, 18 Tennyson Rise, East Grinstead. Tel. 21299  
Cub Scout Leader: Mrs. BRENDA KIRKHAM, Copse Cottage, Ford Manor, Dormansland.  
Group Council Chairman: Lt.-Col. J. T. WALKER, 91 Heathcote Drive, East Grinstead. Tel. 23860

B



**NEWSLETTER**

**6th EAST GRINSTEAD (MOAT CHURCH) SCOUTS**

C



**NEWSLETTER**

**6th EAST GRINSTEAD (MOAT CHURCH) SCOUT GROUP**

D



**NEWSLETTER**

**6th East Grinstead (MOAT CHURCH) Scout Group**

CUB PACK - - Age 8-11 yrs.  
SCOUT TROOP Age 11-16 yrs.  
VENTURE UNIT Age 16-20 yrs.

E



**6th East Grinstead  
MOAT CHURCH  
Scout Group**



F

